

from Buffalo. "I thought you were talking with a man!" he had blurted out, surprised for once into blunt frankness. And then a still queerer look had come over her face, almost a frightened look, he told himself; but she answered quite naturally, "And so I was, my dear. How clever of you! Mrs. Faversham is a perfect coward about using a telephone, so he is giving the instructions for her. He was just saying something very nice about you, but I told him I didn't mean to pass it on!" Faversham! The thing seemed unconvincing. Pompous little Faversham, with his shiny forehead, his thin saffron hair, his nervous stammer! She never would have squandered pouts and smiles on him, even over a telephone. Nora's unembellished manner, her manner for women, would always be good enough for any Faversham. Yet somehow, for the moment it had not struck him that her non-committal form of speech might with equal readiness have designated Mrs. Faversham's husband, or her self-complaisant younger brother, Windon Hinckley.

THE warm, bright, summer afternoon was passing, and still Mellish lingered, staring ineffectually at the doorway, through which he had already ceased to expect her to appear. Suddenly a bevy of women came out together, two, four, yes, six of them. He could not see their faces from across the street. Mrs. Faversham might be there or she might not; but the lizard green moire was unmistakable, even his poor eyes showed that. He made a reckless plunge in front of a delivery waggon, and narrowly shunned an automobile, because his thoughts, like his gaze, were fastened on that group of women across the way, half hidden behind a hansom cab. Nora had told the truth after all, he thought, with a gladness that was almost pain. But as the automobile moved out of his path, he saw her, to his amazement, step into the waiting hansom. A man sprang in after her, a slender man, of medium height, whose face he could not see. The other women had dispersed, melted, vanished in thin air—it scarcely mattered where, if they were not, after all, Mrs. Faversham's luncheon party. He arrived beside the cab; he caught a sidewise glimpse of the coppery hair, the soft, watery shimmer of the green moire; one more step and he could have reached out his hand and touched her arm. The driver swung his long, flexible lash, that snapped like a spiteful cracker within an inch of Mellish's ear. The horse, a yellow roan, with gaunt, ungainly legs, started nervously, scrambling for a foothold on the slippery asphalt, then lurched suddenly forward and swept the woman and her companion from his astounded gaze, around the corner and down Fifth Avenue.

At any other time, had the question been laid impartially before him, Mr. Mellish would have held that a man who tried to follow on foot a rapidly retreating hansom cab through the crowded maze of New York streets, during the busy rush of Saturday afternoon, was in a serious condition, bordering upon lunacy. In the present crisis he did not pause to consider, but simply gathered himself together and sprinted nimbly down the avenue, forgetting for once to be self-conscious, his long, thin legs flashing like the long, thin spokes of a rapidly turning wheel; his glasses threatening to slip from the bridge of his long, thin nose; his near-sighted eyes straining helplessly after the yellow roan, that fitted like a thing of evil, in and out through the endless stream of landaus, motor cars, omnibuses and business wagons. At Twenty-fifth Street the mounted police, stationed there to regulate traffic, waved the south-bound stream of vehicles westward towards Broadway, through the tag-end of a city block that forms the base of the Worth Monument triangle. As they swung in single file, first right, then left again, an electric car for a moment blocked the procession. Like a man chasing a runaway hat, which the wind rolls teasingly just in front of him, Mellish saw, in this temporary lull, a chance to grasp his quarry, although how this was to be done—whether he meant to fling himself into the hansom, like an avenging Nemesis, or to seize the horse by the reins, at the

risk of being dragged in the dust; or simply to verify his suspicions with a glimpse of her companion's face—he had for the moment no idea.

Fate willed it that, in taking the curve, in oblivion of the rights of fellow pedestrians, he should come into collision with a street vender of flowers, a Greek lad with a trayful of spring violets. The damage was inconsiderable, a few bunches flung to the ground, and one of them trodden underfoot; but the occurrence had as sobering effect upon Mr. Mellish; it wakened him to a consciousness of the ridiculous figure he was cutting. He could not run amuck this way, through the Broadway crowd, risking strangers' necks as well as his own. His breath, that already came in hard, dry sobs, was a further admonition. He thrust a dollar bill into the hand of the easily pacified Greek, his eyes all the time intent upon the hansom with the yellow roan, that



The woman interposed, "Jim, can't you see the man is sick? He is going to fall!"

still waited in line not fifty feet ahead of him, with a huge red motor-car impatiently chug-chugging just behind it. Then, all at once, the blockade opened up, the waiting file shot ahead and swung south again, past the Albemarle, the Hoffman House, past the venerable portals of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, onward into the maelstrom of traffic that sweeps around the angle of the Flatiron Building.

MELLISH'S first lucid thought was to spring into one of the many vacant hansoms that waited along the curb and bid him follow the yellow roan, which this time threatened seriously to elude him. He waved to one spasmodically, with his long arm. Then as it promptly responded, he waved it away again. He realized suddenly that he could not bring himself to take a stranger, even an unknown cab driver whom he might never see again, so far into his confidence as to bid him follow that other hansom. No, he could not expose his jealousy to a cab driver; already he pictured the ironical curiosity in the fellow's eyes. Instead, he swung himself on to a Broadway open car, that for two blocks shot southward with such speed that he gained once more rapidly upon the fugitives, when at Twenty-third Street he suddenly lost sight of them altogether. He rose from the seat he had just taken in a bewilderment of helpless indecision. But the car had started once more before he could decide to get off; and the next minute, as it slowed down for passengers at

Twenty-second Street, there came the yellow roan, at full tilt, straight across from Fifth Avenue, as though intent upon running down the car he was in, and him with it. With sudden comprehension he remembered that the police regulations would naturally have obliged it to make the circuit of the Flatiron Building; that was why it had vanished from sight at Twenty-third Street. Now at least he would have a good view of her companion, the man who so insolently appropriated his wife in broad daylight. But three stout women, crowding past him at the critical moment, blocked his view as the cab swung in once more ahead of the car. He had caught only another fugitive glimpse of the green moire, the glint of copper below the green ostrich plume, and still more vaguely a smooth-shaven, black-haired, youngish man beside her. Impotently he cursed his weak, near-sighted eyes, that left him in

doubt who the scoundrel was, who brazenly rode there beside Nora, for all Broadway to see. Was it someone whom he knew? Someone who had clasped his hand, partaken of his salt, enjoyed his hospitality a score of times? Among the men who came habitually to her evenings at home, or freely dropped in for dinner or for tea, there were half a dozen of medium height, smooth-shaven and with darkish hair. It might be any one of these. The names seemed to repeat themselves trippingly in his ear, in rhythm with the hum of the car-wheels—Jack Elting, Ted Voorhis, Windon Hinckley—Windon Hinckley? The image of Mrs. Faversham's brother persisted in recurring to his mind, crowding to the front, elbowing out of the way the other vaguer phantoms of his uncertainty.

NEVER before, in all these months of unspoken jealousy, had his suspicions focussed definitely upon any one man. Windon Hinckley! With his foppish dress, his dilettante manner, the indefinable stamp of dissipation in his boyish face and keen, bold eyes. He had never even tried to like Hinckley. It had jarred upon his sense of fitness to see Nora, with her innate fineness, suffer contact with a nature that he stigmatized as vicious. Yet this antipathy was so intangible that he had never put it into words. He had simply left the house, on more than one flimsy excuse, had gone out into the winter night, rather than listen to Windon's light, frothy talk, rather than hear his high-pitched laugh, that seemed to penetrate the furthest corner of the apartment, rather than see Nora's gray eyes widen mockingly, in feigned rebuke of his flippant audacities. That was the way he had guarded his home, by taking his hat and going out into the winter night! No wonder that Windon's laughter had seemed to fill the apartment. So blind a husband was a rare diversion! And, after all, how was it that he had never been definitely afraid of Windon before? Now that his mind was receptive of something definite, a hundred damnable trifles rose up out of the past, cumulative and convincing.

At Union Square the cab turned east once more. Mellish sprang recklessly from his car, without waiting for it to slow up, and broke into a run once more, as though the devil were spurring him. A hundred flower vendors with trampled violets could not have stayed him now, under the impulsion of his new certainty. Cutting diagonally across the square, he gained somewhat on the cab, which was fading into the vista of Fifteenth Street when he finally reached the corner. Luck once more played into his hands, in the shape of an open trench where a gas main was being repaired. The cab must wait while a dump cart was backed out of the way. Ten doors further on it drew up in front of a four-storey brick dwelling in whose fallen fortunes could be read the history of a slow transition through successive grades of indigent gentility. It had lately been converted into a second-rate bachelor apartment, of the sort that exercised no censorship over the quality or sex of its tenant's visitors. The vestibule, with the gleaming brass of its speaking-tubes and letter boxes, was the one touch of newness in the whole shabby exterior.

Mellish, reeling dizzily in pursuit, his forces almost spent, was not a hundred feet away when the hansom